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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains an account of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa from July 2015 to June 2016.

During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to assist Member States, at their request, and intergovernmental and civil society organizations in Africa to promote peace, security and disarmament.

In response to the continued challenge to peace, security and stability posed by the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the region, in particular in Central Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, the Regional Centre focused its work on providing assistance to Member States, at their request, to combat the illicit trafficking in and prevent the diversion of such weapons. It also provided assistance in the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and of instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In doing so, the Centre partnered with the African Union, subregional organizations, civil society organizations and other United Nations entities.

The Regional Centre continued to provide substantive support on disarmament issues to the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa at their ministerial and governmental expert meetings.

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The Regional Centre strengthened its own capacity to respond to requests from Member States in Africa in the fields of disarmament, peace and security through enhanced project development and resource mobilization. The Centre also implemented its communication strategy by developing information and outreach material and by proactively reaching out to stakeholders.

The Secretary-General thanks those Member States and other institutions that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre, enabling it to fulfil its mandate during the reporting period, and calls upon all Member States and other stakeholders to continue to make contributions.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 70/66, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the tangible achievements and impact of the assistance provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and welcomed the continental dimensions of its activities in response to the evolving needs of African Member States and the region's new and emerging challenges in the areas of disarmament, peace and security, including maritime security.

2. The present report, submitted pursuant to the request contained in that resolution for the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the resolution, covers the activities of the Regional Centre from July 2015 to June 2016. Information on the status of the Trust Fund for the Centre in 2015 is contained in the annex.

II. Functioning and mandate

3. The Regional Centre was established in 1986 in Lomé pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/151 G. The year 2016 marks its thirtieth anniversary. The Centre functions on the basis of existing resources within the Secretariat and of voluntary contributions that Member States and other donors may offer.

4. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre implemented its programme of work in the following main areas: peace and security; conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons; weapons of mass destruction; information and outreach; and cooperation and partnerships with regional and subregional organizations and other entities.

III. Programmes

5. The Regional Centre provides support and technical assistance to Member States in Africa, at their request, in the promotion of disarmament, peace and security through capacity-building and training programmes, advocacy, research and information sharing. It works in partnership with the African Union, other intergovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions and civil society organizations in the implementation of its programmes, projects and other activities. In the light of the specific nature of security and disarmament issues in Africa, the Centre continued to place emphasis on activities aimed at preventing the illicit trafficking in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

6. The Regional Centre continued to raise the awareness of African Member States of issues relating to weapons of mass destruction, in particular by assisting in implementing disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, such as Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to non-State actors and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

A. Peace and security

7. The Regional Centre initiated discussions with the African Union Commission on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16 and, thereunder, Goals 16.1 and 16.4 on the reduction of violence and illicit flows of arms. The Centre is also examining synergies and complementarities with the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the aspiration of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020.

8. The Regional Centre continued to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel through the provision of technical assistance to improve small arms control and physical security and stockpile management. It actively participated in the inter-agency coordination and exchange of information efforts led by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, providing expert advice to Member States, United Nations missions and other stakeholders on issues relating to disarmament in general and weapons stockpile management, safety and security in particular.

9. The Regional Centre provided substantive support to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa at its forty-first and forty-second ministerial meetings, held in Libreville in November 2015 and Bangui in June 2016. The Centre updated the 11 States members of the Standing Advisory Committee on disarmament developments at the international, regional and subregional levels and on international and regional efforts in promoting and supporting the implementation of disarmament instruments.

10. At the request of the Standing Advisory Committee, the Regional Centre continued to examine the adverse consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons for maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea and will report to the Committee thereon.

11. The Secretary-General reiterates his call upon the Member States of the region to ratify the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly. To date, five States have ratified the Convention.

B. Small arms and light weapons

12. The Regional Centre supported African Member States, at their request, in implementing global and regional instruments to combat the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons by providing assistance in implementing regional and national action plans on small arms and in strengthening the capacity of Governments and civil society organizations.

13. As an observer member of the African Union-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, the Regional Centre continued to work closely with the African Union Commission and the regional economic communities and provided its expertise at the sixth meeting of the Steering Committee, held in Abuja in November 2015. The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on, and draw

lessons from, the challenges and achievements of national, subregional and regional small arms control efforts and to discuss how the Steering Committee could further improve coordination, effectiveness and sustainability.

14. The Regional Centre continued to support the African Union and its member States in the implementation of the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which serves as a framework to improve the coordination of activities aimed at combating and preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects on the continent. The Centre also continued to participate as an observer in the Steering Committee of the African Union-European Union project to fight against the illicit accumulation and trafficking of firearms in Africa in the implementation of the second phase of the project.

15. As part of its contribution to implementing the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, the Regional Centre concluded an assessment survey of the small arms situation in countries of the Sahel and neighbouring countries, which was jointly carried out with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and received technical assistance from the Small Arms Survey and the Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security. The survey results directly contributed to a three-year project to improve physical security and stockpile management measures in the Sahel to reduce the risk of diversion of small arms and light weapons and ammunition, as well as accidental explosions at ammunition sites.

16. The aforementioned project was launched during the Wilton Park conference on the theme "Towards better physical security and stockpile management in the Sahel region", organized by Wilton Park and the Regional Centre in March 2016 in Lomé. The Centre organized national consultations with the national commissions on small arms and light weapons of Burkina Faso, in May 2016, the Niger, in May and June 2016, and Nigeria, in June 2016. The consultations were aimed at developing national legislative and administrative measures for managing weapons and identifying priority stockpiling sites to serve as pilot sites for rehabilitation. Additional consultations are planned in 2016 for Chad, Mali and Mauritania. The initiatives were coordinated through the platform established by the African Union Commission, with the support of the Government of Germany, as part of the Nouakchott Process on the enhancement of security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region.

17. The Regional Centre's sustained assistance to the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons of Mali also supported the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Its assistance focused on building the capacity of the Commission to mark and register small arms and light weapons, by providing marking equipment training to security and defence officers working on marking and registration. The project resulted in the marking of 1,780 State-owned arms. Technical assistance was also provided by the National Commission on Small Arms of Côte d'Ivoire, thereby promoting regional cooperation and assistance. The Centre also assisted with national awareness-raising programmes in Mali on the importance of marking and registration vis-à-vis private security companies and makers of artisanal weapons.

18. To assist in the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons and the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit

Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Regional Centre collaborated with the African Union Commission in the organization of a training course, in October 2015, on the identification and tracing of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition for the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States. The training was supported by experts from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the non-governmental organization Conflict Armament Research.

19. To improve State capacity to prevent the acquisition of arms by terrorist groups, the Regional Centre, within the framework of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, developed a project on strengthening the control of government-held small arms and light weapons and preventing the diversion of those weapons to such groups. The Centre is planning to pilot the project in the countries of the Lake Chad basin (Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria), with financial support from Switzerland and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre.

20. With a view to strengthening coordination with other stakeholders in these areas, the Regional Centre contributed substantively to initiatives on small arms and light weapons control issues organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNDP, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mines Advisory Group.

C. Arms Trade Treaty

21. An analysis of synergies and complementarities between the Arms Trade Treaty and the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials was undertaken in cooperation with and at the request of the ECOWAS Commission. The Regional Centre also collaborated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the African Union Commission in convening a workshop on the implementation of the obligations under the Treaty relating to human rights and gender-based violence. It resulted in the identification of specific steps that could assist in the ratification of the Treaty and foster its implementation and the protection of the rights of women against gender-based violence.

22. As part of a project coordinated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the Regional Centre concluded the mapping of assistance activities in support of the Arms Trade Treaty implemented in sub-Saharan Africa between 2011 and 2015. The mapping resulted in the compilation of more than 200 activities and an online database (www.att-assistance.org).

D. Weapons of mass destruction

23. The Regional Centre supported Member States in their efforts to implement instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to non-State actors.

24. The Regional Centre provided substantive support to the preparatory meeting for the African Union Review and Assistance Conference on the Implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004) in Africa, held in September 2015, and shared its expertise

during regional events on the resolution organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in February 2016 and the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in April 2016.

E. Information and outreach

25. As part of its efforts to make disarmament information and materials available to an increasing number of States and stakeholders in the region, the Regional Centre continued to cooperate with the International Organization of la Francophonie in the development of a practitioner's handbook on disarmament in Africa.

26. To sustain momentum for the multi-pronged Agenda 2063 and the aspiration of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, the Regional Centre, in collaboration with the United Nations Office to the African Union, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the African Union Commission, organized a high-level panel discussion on building partnerships to silence the guns, held in January 2016. The Centre also participated in a panel discussion on the theme "Silencing the guns: how do African States control small arms and light weapons?", organized by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University in December 2015.

27. On the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March), the Regional Centre briefed participants in the communication network of the Women, Peace and Security Institute of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre on ways to increase the participation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in line with General Assembly resolution 65/69 and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The Centre participated in a panel discussion on small arms and light weapons at the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development, co-hosted by the Government of Sweden and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in April 2016.

28. The Regional Centre continued to implement its communications strategy with the objective of improving outreach and interaction with Member States, regional and subregional organizations, civil society organizations and the public at large regarding its work and priorities. Briefings for the diplomatic corps were organized in Lomé in July 2015 and Addis Ababa in December 2015 to inform diplomats about the work of the Centre and raise their awareness of current disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation challenges in Africa.

29. The Regional Centre's electronic newsletter, "UNREC Focus", is distributed to more than 7,300 global subscribers, providing information about regional disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues and the initiatives and activities of the Centre. Furthermore, new interactive features continued to be added to the Centre's website. Between July 2015 and June 2016, the website recorded 82,700 visitors.

30. In commemoration of Disarmament Week (24-30 October), the Regional Centre reached out to all United Nations resident coordinators in Africa and piloted an online platform to provide ideas and resources for commemorative activities. The Centre also organized the screening of a documentary, *The Man Who Saved the World*, for more than 100 young people between 15 and 20 years of age, which was followed by a discussion on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

IV. Staffing, financing and administration

A. Financial situation

31. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/151 G on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2015, voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Centre were received in the amount of $1,514,793. Information on the status of the Trust Fund in 2015 is contained in the annex to the present report. Additional contributions were also received during the first half of 2016.

32. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Governments of Cameroon, France, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, as well as the European Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the donor States of the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, UNDP, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, for their financial contributions. The Secretary-General also expresses his appreciation to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for its in-kind contribution.

B. Staffing

33. The regular budget of the United Nations currently funds the posts of the Director, a Political Affairs Officer and two national support staff. Project staff are funded through voluntary contributions. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued its cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers programme. The Secretary-General thanks the Government of Germany for the funding of an associate expert in legal affairs and the Government of the United States for supporting the cost of a national United Nations volunteer through the Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities in support of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

V. Conclusion

34. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to carry out its programmes, with the support of donors, to provide assistance to African Member States, at their request, in the areas of peace, security and disarmament and enhanced its collaboration with partners, including the African Union and subregional organizations, with a view to achieving synergies in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation objectives in Africa.

35. The Regional Centre assisted Member States, at their request, in strengthening their capacity to combat the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons and in implementing instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Furthermore, the Centre engaged in activities relating to the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and conducted outreach initiatives to raise awareness of disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

36. The sustained number of requests for assistance from Member States and regional organizations demonstrated the importance of the work of the Regional Centre in the field of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and security in the region. Building on its past work and expertise, the Centre continues to develop and implement new projects and activities that meet the priority needs of Member States on issues within its mandate.

37. In carrying out its programme and activities, the Regional Centre collaborated with key stakeholders and strengthened its continental role by creating networks and partnerships at the regional and subregional levels. The Centre will continue its efforts to maximize the utilization of resources and expertise through cooperation and the sharing of experiences with partner entities in the region.

38. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Regional Centre, the Secretary-General calls upon Member States and other donors to provide the Centre with the financial and in-kind support necessary to enable it to continue to fulfil its mandate effectively in serving the needs of African Member States in the fields of peace, security and disarmament.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for 2015

(United States dollars)

Reserves and fund balance, 1 January 2015	**199 214**
Prior-year adjustment	32 422[a]
Accumulated surplus/(deficit)	231 636
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions	1 491 902[b]
Investment revenue	5 457
Total revenue	**1 497 359**
Expenses	
Operating expenses	374 521
Depreciation and amortization	3 822
Total expenses	**378 343**
Surplus/(deficit)	1 119 016
Accumulated surplus	**1 350 652**[c]

[a] Consists of a contribution in the amount of $8,025 from Germany in 2015 and miscellaneous income of $1,961.

[b] Consists of the contributions received from France ($21,882), Germany ($192,774), Switzerland ($200,000), Togo ($61,049), the European Commission ($509,302), the International Organization de la Francophonie ($21,947), the Stockholm International Peace' Research Institute ($19,500) and the United Nations Development Programme ($486,339), less a refund of $20,891 to Oxfam.

[c] Consists of the accumulated surplus as at 1 January 2015, plus revenue received, less expenses, during the year.